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No. 415

# GRACIE

A Comedy in One Act

BY

BESSIE SPRINGER BREENE

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(In the order in which they speak)*

"PUCK" EVANS ..... *A Senior.*  
"BIS" NELSON ..... *A Senior.*  
"DUCKY" LANE !..... *A Sophomore.*  
LOUIE GRACE MARTIN, ("GRACIE") *A Freshman*  
DICK LESTER ..... *A Senior.*  
"DUD" ELLIOTT ..... *A "Grad".*

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## GRACIE

SCENE:-Sitting room of PUCK, BIS and DUCKY'S rooms at college.

TIME:-Mid-afternoon in October.

*A typical college room with many pennants and pictures on the walls, many pillows on the couch, and tennis rackets golf sticks and base ball bats stacked in the corners. At R. C. two windows, curtained in white and with shades up to the top. At R. a fire-place, with a fire. In front a couch. On the mantle, a clock and many pipes and steins. Down R. a table with a student lamp, books and papers on it and behind a chair. Down left a flat top desk also littered with papers, and having a telephone book, telephone and a lamp on it. Near by, a wastebasket with papers in it. Behind the desk another arm chair. Other chairs are about the room. At left a book case, with books and under window, a seat piled with pillows. At L. C. a door to outside hall, and near it a hat rack loaded with hats, caps and coats. There is a door right and left, leading to bedrooms. The light is that of a mid afternoon in October. As the curtain rises, PUCK and BIS are discovered. BIS at table, PUCK at desk, both study. Both are clean cut, college boy types.*

PUCK. What do you get on that third "Calc" problem, Bis?

BIS. (Nose in book) Not a thing.

PUCK. (*Returning to his book*) Same here (*Pause*) Gosh! I miss old "Lady" Clayton.

BIS. It sure is a crime he can't come back. Financial difficulties, isn't it?

PUCK. (*Gesticulating with pencil*) Yep, and believe *me*, *we're* facing financial difficulties too, if we don't get a fourth fellow in here with us to take lady's place. We can't pay for these rooms on our allowances, with only three of us to stand the strain. We'll be broke all the time if we try to.

BIS. (*Gloomily*) We need another fellow all right, but where will we get him?

PUCK. Well I told 'em down at the Union that if a bird ambled in there looking for a room, to send him up here, cause we had some space, but nobody's turned up.

BIS. It's too late Puck. Everybody's got rooms by now—

PUCK. That's the trouble. Oh well — (*Studies*)

BIS. How about Dick Lester?

PUCK. The senior that's rushing my sister Elaine? (*BIS nods*) He's tied up at the Phi Zet house, and anyhow I see enough of him at home, without living with him.

BIS. Camps on Elaine's trail pretty steady eh?

PUCK. Steady! He's there eight nights a week.

BIS. (*Interested*) Wedding bells?

PUCK. I don't know. (*Turns in seat to face BIS*) Girls are queer cattle. You never know what they'll do. Why I've worn grooves in a girl's door step, doing the light fantastic up and down them so often, and then lost out to a fellow who never

called more than once a month in his life.

BIS. Does Elaine show any signs of palpitation when the door bell rings?

PUCK. Not a palp: but here's the mystery. She has a cat fit when the mail man comes, and doesn't leave her a letter. She was out west last summer, and I figured maybe she met some one out there, but I can't find out a thing. If I ask her whether she got a letter, she coos "Mind your own business, Puck" and then I know the mail man's passed her by *that* day.

BIS. Humph.

PUCK. I think she's marking time with Dick till this other bird comes across with a "Will you be mine" epistle.

BIS. It's queer he hasn't been to see her.

PUCK. Yes. I said to Elaine, "It's a wonder that guy doesn't appear and help decorate the landscape around here a little" and she says *very* innocently. "WHO?"

BIS. Can you beat that?

*Door L. C. opens and DUCKY bounces in flinging off his coat and hat as he slams the door with his foot. He is of a type similar to the other boys but even more breezy in speech and manner)*

DUCKY. Say fellows. We gotta a nibble for our bed and board here.

BOTH. (*Turning in seats*) Who is it?

DUCKY. (*Flinging hat on rack*) Dunno, but Beck over at the Union said just now that a cuckoo had eased in looking for a place to park, and he told him ot come over here.

BIS. Good work!

PUCK. Hope he'll be all right, for we need him—

DUCKY. (*Flopping into chair at c.*) Say, if he's got only one decent suit of clothes and takes a bath on Saturday night exclusively, I'll take him in with *me*, for I can't stand the strain of the rent alone. I'm only a struggling young lawyer, and—(*Knock at door L. C.*) Maybe that's the fellow now. (*Gets up and opens the door on MARTIN who is carrying a suit case is standing in the hall. He is an attractive well built fellow about the same age as the others. Well, but not very stylishly dressed. Wears an overcoat and a soft hat and a pair of heavy horn rimmed glasses that give him an owlsh look. His manner of speaking is very positive and bombastic, yet there is a certain difference and as though he was forcing himself to talk as he does*)

MARTIN. (*Setting down bag on threshold*) Is this Mr. Evans?

PUCK. (*Rising*) I'm Evans.

MARTIN. (*Taking off hat and coming to c.*) I'm Louie Grace Martin of Sunnyside Arkansas, and I'm just the man you're looking for to take the room you have vacant. (*Boys gasp.*) (*Ducky shuts door on bag and then opens it and hauls bag inside and slams the door again and stands before it.*) (*Bis rises*)

MARTIN. (*To BIS*) I'm Louie Grace Martin of Sunnyside Arkansas and I'm just the man you're looking for to—

BIS. So you said, so you said. Got any references?



MARTIN. (*Nonplussed but recovering*) Er—well—NO certainly NOT. Everyone should stand on his own feet. (*He says this as tho repeating a lesson*) You can, or SHOULD be able to see that I'm all right.

DUCKY. Well—the room is fifteen per week and half the bed is mine.

MARTIN. Ah yes. And you are—

DUCKY. Lane, is my name. Ducky for short.

MARTIN. (*Shaking hands*) I'm Louie Grace Mar—

DUCKY. (*Grinning*) Sure, Gracie. How are you.

BIS and PUCK. (*Overcome with silent laughter*) Gracie!!

DUCKY. Can you stand the 15 dollar tax?

MARTIN. Yes, of course.

DUCKY. (*Opening his arms*) Come to my bosom! I'll show you the room. (*Hauls the bag and GRACIE out L.*)

BIS. Say, Ducky—Ducky—

DUCKY. (*Re-entering and speaking off*) Make yourself at home.

BIS. You don't know a thing about this fellow.

PUCK. Why no—

DUCKY. He says he can pay the fifteen spondoolicks, and he looks clean enough, and he's going to be a riot. Louie Grace Martin of Sunnyside Ark—

BIS. He's a nut!

DUCKY. Sure and what is any family circle without a little nut in their home? (*Knock at door, L. c. DUCKY opens it*) Hello Dick, howdy. (*Dick*

LESTER enters. *He is very good looking, in a weak sort of way and has a shifty glance and manner*)

BIS. *(At fire, lighting a cigarette)* Hello Dick.

PUCK. *(At desk)* 'lo Lester.

DICK. Hello fellows. *(Drops into chair)* Did you get an answer to that third "Calc" problem?

BIS. *(At fire)* No, and never will.

DICK. I saw the "prof" just now and he said to tell you fellows that that problem is stated wrong in the book and to let her flicker or words to that effect. *(Lights cigarette)*

BIS. *(Sits on couch)* Well I'll be—

DICK. I worked on it so long myself that I'm dotty, and Oh! say,—what I saw down street just now made me more dotty.

PUCK. What's that?

DICK. As I was rounding the corner of the campus, I sighted Elaine. I was hurrying to catch up to her when a fellow breezes up and stops her, and what do you suppose he said? *(None of them know)* He shouts out. "I'm Louie Grace Martin of Sunnyside— *(As all laugh)* What's the matter?

DUCKY. *(At table)* Not a thing, only he's our new room mate.

DICK. *That idiot?*

DUCKY. Surest thing you know.

DICK. *(Disgusted)* Why he's crazy as a loon—he's got wheels in his head—

DUCKY. Sure, and fifteen bones a week in his jeans, that's all I care.

PUCK. What then? What about Elaine?

DICK. I was about to walk up and land him one in the eye when I heard Elaine say, "Lou Martin"—

PUCK. She knew him?

DICK. Sure. She stood there quite a while talking to him, and she said after that she had met him in Arkansas last summer—the poor soup—

BIS. (*Coming down to table*) Arkansas? Say Puck—

PUCK. (*Disgusted tone*) That chump?—Elaine? Never, kiddo!

DICK. What's that?

PUCK. Oh nothing you know about.

DICK. Anyhow, he gave her his address—

BIS. He was darn sure of being taken in, wasn't he?

DICK. I never dreamed he was rooming with you fellows.

DUCKY. He's going to lighten many a weary hour for us, I can see that now—(*GRACIE appears at door L.*) Hello Gracie, come right in. Gracie, our friend Dick Lester—

GRACIE. (*Summoning his dignity*) I'm LOUIE Grace Martin, NOT Gracie.

DUCKY. Here, you are Gracie.

BIS. Sure, Gracie old dear. Sit down. (*GRACIE sits near DICK at c.*)

DICK. I just met you talking to Elaine Evans.

GRACIE. (*Sitting up with an owl like expression*) Oh yes, very nice girl. Very nice—she's crazy about *me*.

ALL. WHAT?

GRACIE. (*Easily*) Yes. All the girls are for that matter. Of course you really can't blame

them. Take a look at me and you will see why. Good looking young fellow, snappy dresser, brains—sure they *all* fall. (*Boys are overcome with laughter, tho PUCK is not so well pleased and DICK is furious*)

PUCK. (*Drily*) Don't let Elaine string you along any. Er—Lester has the inside track there.

GRACIE. (*After darting a look of sudden alarm at DICK, but at once resuming his positive manner*) What makes you so sure, my dear man? (*To PUCK*)

PUCK. (*Leaning back in seat*) Elaine happens to be my sister so I ought to know.

GRACIE. (*With emphatic fore finger*) You *think* you know, but you are not on the inside track like I am. Miss Evans and I are going to be married in June.

PUCK. (*Jumping up*) WHAT!!

DICK. The devil you are! (*Jumps up.*)

GRACIE. She doesn't know it yet of course.—(*DICK sneers "Oh she doesn't—"*) but we are—

PUCK. (*Ironically*) Cave man stuff eh?

GRACIE. Not at all. Not at all, she just won't be able to resist me. *She is mine now!*

DUCKY. (*Offering him a cigarette with a grin*) Say smoke up.

GRACIE. (*First refusing and then taking the cigarette*) No—thanks, er yes I will. (*Positively*) What you *think* you can, you can. (*Lights it gingerly and seems new at smoking it*)

BIS. (*Tapping forehead*) Nobody home (*Knock at door.*) DUCKY goes up and opens it, and discloses DUD ELLIOTT. Tall well built, well dressed chap, older than the others, and with a more quiet

*business-like air than the rest.)*

DUCKY. DUD! (*Hauls him into the room, bag and all that DUD carries*) (*All rise delighted*)

BIS. (*Embracing him while PUCK seizes one hand*) Its old Dud—

PUCK. (*Overjoyed*) Well, well old fellow. How are you?

DUD. Fine, fine. How's everybody? Hello Ducky.

DUCKY. Where did you come from (*DICK and GRACIE stand back, silent*)

DUD. I'm here on a little business. Can you put me up for the night?

PUCK. Sure, there's the davenport.

BIS. Meet Dick Lester. Mr. Elliott. Dud's our old room mate, Dick graduated from school and into matrimony last June. How's Elsie, Dud? (*DUD shakes hands with DICK*)

DUD. She's fine. And how's Elaine, Puck?

PUCK. All right. Mother and she are here this winter.

DUD. Your hands are full then looking after her, are'nt they? How's Lady Clayton?

PUCK. He couldn't come back this year—

DUD. I was afraid he wouldn't be able to make the grade. Too bad. Who's here with you in his place.

DUCKY. Oh pardon ME, our new "lodger," Gracie Martin, Mr. Elliott..

GRACIE. I'm Louie Grace Martin of Sunnyside Arkansas—

DUD. (*Shaking hands*) Well, you're Gracie to me if the fellows say so.

GRACIE. Its all right. I knew you'd be impressed with me. (DUD looks startled, and the others chuckle. PUCK sitting on desk taps a significant finger on his head. DUD amused comes down and sits at desk. BIS seats himself at table. GRACIE sits at c. near DICK and DUCKY sprawls on couch at fire.)

DUCKY. (Leading GRACIE on, as all light pipes or cigarettes) So all the girls are crazy about you, eh Gracie?

GRACIE. Yes. You see, they like a masterful man—

BIS. Drag 'em out by the hair stuff—

GRACIE. Sort of—

DUD. You're way off. Take it from me. I'm a meek married man. I know! A woman likes to be babied—

GRACIE. AFTERWARDS perhaps, 'my good man, but not before marriage. No sir my method never fails. I go up to a girl and I say "I'm your affinity" and right off she believes it. Of course you have to have looks and brains and er—brawn—(rises to let DUD feel his arm.) BIS and DUCKY are overcome. DICK disgusted)

DUD. (Stifling his laughter) Regular little Hercules, I'll say.

GRACIE. (Returning to his seat and speaking as tho repeating a lesson) What you think you can, you can. I made up my mind I'd have a perfect physique. (DUCKY and BIS explode) (GRACIE looks at them inquiringly and proceeds) And so you see, I have it.

PUCK. (Laughing) Made up your mind to be a lady killer too, I suppose.

GRACIE. Well yes—no, NO, I was born one. You don't see a fellow with my looks very often—

DICK. And nerve—don't leave out the nerve.

DUCKY. You're some press agent, old top.

GRACIE. (*Quoting in a sepulchral tone*) "He who tooteth not his own horn shall not have the same tooted—

BIS. Quotations from the Police Gazette, Eh?

PUCKY. I can stand no more! Come on Gracie, let's go and decide on the drawers you *want* in the dresser, and see those you'll *get*—(*Hauls GRACIE out L. by the arm.*)

GRACIE. (*Protesting*) But I want to tell Dud Elliott about the girl in—

DUD. I'll live without hearing it—

DUCKY. Come on. (*Exit L.*)

DICK. The man's an ass.

PUCK. (*Getting off desk*) He's a riot tho—  
(*DUCKY re-enters*)

DUD. Gosh, what a goat he is going to be around here—lets walk down the street, want to? I want to see the fellows.

BIS. (*Rising*) Sure—

DUD. (*Drawing roll of bills from pocket*) Wonder if I can stow this away any place. Its company money and I don't want to get my pockets picked—(*GRACIE appears at door L. wiping hands on a towel*)

PUCK. Sling it in the desk. Nobody'll touch it there. (*DUD opens drawer of desk, puts in the money, and shuts the drawer. GRACIE exits L. again. PUCK begins to get into his overcoat that he takes from rack*)

BIS. (*Exits R.*) Come on in here Dud, and see



some of the Aeroplane stuff I picked up—(DUD exits R.)

PUCK. (*Hunting in pockets of overcoat*) Where the deuce are my gloves. (*Exit R. also*)

DUCKY. (*Putting on coat from rack*) Who's your room mate this year, Dick.

DICK. Pete Landis. Why?

DUCKY. Just wondered.

BIS. (*Off right*) Duck, come here—(*Phone rings*)

DUCKY. (*Calling*) Just a second. (*In phone*) Hello. Yep. Hello Pete. Yeah, he's here, just a minute—(*To DICK*) That's funny. We were just talking about him and here he is on the phone. Its Pete Landis, wants to talk to you—(*Exits R.*)

DICK. (*Sitting at desk*) Hello. Yes. How's that? Harry? (*Seems alarmed*) What's he say? (*Anxiously*) All right, put him on. (*Waits*) Yes, Harry? (*Low tone and looks about to be sure no one is listening*) Oh, now look here Harry, I can't get any money this afternoon. I'm broke I tell you—My God Harry, don't begin talking about any warrents—I'll pay you—some way, honest—Give me till tomorrow—will you, PLEASE—I'll see you first thing in the morning, honest—all right. (*Hands up*) Gosh!! (*Looks very upset and fumbles nervously. Voices of the boys are heard off R. There is a knock at the door L. C. and DICK goes and opens it. Receives a stack of letters and magazines. Comes back and throws them on the desk and stands looking terribly worried. Mutters "Damn it" under his breath. Begins to idly turn letters over when one strikes his eye and he picks it up, looks at it, seems to recognize the handwrit-*



*ing, and after a second's hesitancy, carefully opens the envelope and reads the letter. Looks startled and then furious and is about to replace it in envelope when GRACIE enters L. and the boys, with the exception of PUCK, enter R. Hastily tearing the envelope once across, DICK drops it in the waste basket, and turns calmly as the boys stop, looking somewhat surprised at seeing him handling their mail. GRACIE goes to couch and sits.)*

DICK. Here's the mail, and er—here's one for me.

BIS. How'd it come here?

DICK. Oh the mailman gave it to me when I took yours in. Its from—Elaine.

BIS. (*Surprised*) Elaine? (*DUD gets into coat that he takes from rack and looks for his hat. GRACIE looks up suddenly*) What's she got to say?

DICK. (*Easily, now*) Oh—not much. We had sort of a—row, and she wants to square it. Says she really cares—if you know. Can't let you see it.

BIS. (*Decidedly*) Certainly not. (*PUCK enters R. DICK stuffs letter in his pocket. GRACIE on couch, picks at pillow and seems sunk in a bitter reverie that he suddenly forces himself to come out of*)

GRACIE. (*Firm voice*) Nevertheless, *all* the girls are wild over me.

BIS. So you said. So you said.

GRACIE. Elaine is crazy about me too.

DICK. (*Viciously*) Is she? Well. Just read that. (*He crosses over to GRACIE and thrusts letter under his nose*) Read that. (*GRACIE does so*

*and turns away silently*) Satisfied? (*With a sneer at GRACIE*)

PUCK. What's that?

DICK. A letter from Elaine. I don't generally do a thing like this, Puck, but this poor simp makes me sick with his boasting.

DUD. Well, come on, lets get started. (*He seems ill pleased at DICK's action. PUCK looks doubtful also but dismisses it with a shrug*)

PUCK. Come on fellows.

DUCKY. I'll go as far as the corner with you. Coming, Gracie?

GRACIE. NO.

DICK. I want to look over your "Chem" notes Bis, if you don't mind.

BIS. Sure. (*All go out L. c. and close door.*)

DICK. (*With a little laugh goes to desk and sits to look at booklet, but turns with a sneer to GRACIE*) Not so cocksure now, are you?

GRACIE. (*As tho forcing it*) Why I'm a great man. I'm a clever man, I'm a good looking man, I'm a—

DICK. (*Nose in book*) FOOL!!

GRACIE. (*Somewhat halfheartedly gesticulating to himself, rises and crosses to c.*) All the girls are in love with ME. I know it. I KNOW it. (*Exits L.*)

DICK. (*Leaning back in seat*) Crazy as a loon. (*Begins to study again but as if remembering, he looks worried, shoves hands in pockets, and then unable to keep still walks the floor. Throws himself into chair at desk. Pounds softly on desk with his fist and begins to pull at knob of drawer. Suddenly a thought comes to him, and after glancing*

around he pulls open the drawer, takes out the money and looks at it irresolutely. Then counts it rapidly. GRACIE entering L. looking very doleful, all his confident manner gone, and minus his glasses, stops short amazed. DICK, not hearing him finishes counting, holds the money a moment decides to take it all and stuffs it in his pocket.)

Neither see DUCKY who entering L. c. stops short at sight and then looking very grim, silently withdraws again. DICK suddenly intuitive turns swiftly in his seat, but GRACIE, whistling softly crosses to couch. DICK, panic-stricken, pulls book to him and bends his head over it, but at GRACIE'S remark he relaxes, sure that GRACIE has seen nothing)

GRACIE. (Looking at him shrewdly but resuming his bombastic tone.) You know, it TAKES a big man like me to win a girl.

DICK. Oh sure—sure. (Heaves a sigh of relief. Hearing the voices of the returning boys he rises and saunters to table with his book where he sits. BIS, DUD, and PUCK reenter L. c.)

DUD. I'll have to get a little more cash if I'M going to play any pool with you Puck. I know you of old. (Boys laugh. DICK stiffens in seat as DUD approaches the desk) (GRACIE suddenly alert comes down to table) BIS and PUCK stand at L. c. with DUD.)

DUD. Last time I played pool with Puck, I walked home. Now I'm out for revenge.

BIS. You'll have to hump to get it. Puck's a wizard with the cue—why Harry's says Puck's the best—(They talk)

GRACIE. (Grabbing DICK by the shoulder, and

*speaking in a fierce undertone*) Hand over that money. (*DICK is about to protest that he 'hasn't it but at GRACIE'S stern face, and scared to death, he hands out the roll and GRACIE puts it in his own pockets. As DICK pulls out roll of bills, the letter falls unnoticed to the floor. GRACIE saunters to window. This is taken very fast*)

DUD. (*Going to desk and pulling open the drawer*) I'll put up a ten spot anyhow, and if I lose that I'll call it a day. (*Looks for money, cannot find it, straightens up and a peculiar look comes to his face DICK watches furtively*)

BIS. (*Noticing*) What's the matter Dud? (*PUCK turns*)

DUD. The money, fellows—Did'nt I put it in here?

PUCK. Yes.

DUD. Then it's gone.

PUCK. (*Coming down*) Gone? You don't mean it.

BIS. (*Hurrying forward to look*) It must be there some place.

DICK. (*Suddenly realizing that he must show concern*) What is the matter? Lost anything?

DUD. (*Perturbed*) Yes, the roll of bills I stuck in here.

DICK. (*After a swift glance at GRACIE who is looking out of the window, and rising to join in the hunt*) For Pete's sake! Was it much?

DUD. (*Turning out drawer*) A couple of hundred, that's all, but it was'nt my money—

BIS. It is'nt here, that's sure.

DUD. I could'nt have put it in here, I guess.

PUCK. But you did. I saw you.

DUD. (*Hastily*) Then its gone. Let's forget it. (*Goes up*)

PUCK. (*Pounding on desk*) Not on your life. You put that money in there, and its not here now. I hate to say it, but some one of US have taken it. Fellows—(*He turns out his own pockets on desk*)

DUD. (*Returning hastily*) No—no, Puck not that—I—I don't want to know—I don't want to find it that way—let it go. I'll get a check cashed—let it go.

BIS. No sir. If one of us is a thief we want to know it. (*Turns out his own pockets*) It ain't little Bis. (*He and PUCK slowly replace the contents of their pockets.*)

DICK. (*Swiftly turning out his pockets*) Say, this is the limit. (*All turn to GRACIE who with back to them stands motionless at window.*)

BIS. Gracie:—Its only a matter of form but—

GRACIE. (*Without turning*) No. I don't turn out my pockets for anyone.

PUCK. (*Starting furiously*) Look here Martin—this is serious (*DUCKY enters, stops short and realizing what is wrong, closes door after him and stands in front of it. Looks at DICK then at GRACIE surprised and then asks casually*) What's wrong?

PUCK. The money that Dud put in that desk is gone. We have all turned out our pockets, voluntarily, but Martin refuses.

DUCKY. Martin? (*Looks again at DICK who fumbling at book does not see it*) Well, come on Gracie, turn em out.

GRACIE. (*Doggedly*) No.

PUCK. Then there is only one construction we

can place on your refusal. Hand over that money or we'll make you. (*Starts for him but DUCKY catches his arm and says "Steady"*)

GRACIE. (*Back to window now*) No.

PUCK. (*As DUCKY restrains him and DUD calls "PUCK"*) Give me that money.

GRACIE. I didn't take it.

BIS. Then why don't you turn out your pockets?

GRACIE. My word ought to be good.

DUCKY. They don't know you, Gracie. Turn em out.

GRACIE. No, I said.

PUCK. (*Grabbing him*) look here. (*Bis joins him, tho DUD tries to stop them, and they scuffle. GRACIE breaks away and darts for the door, but DUD is ahead of him and bars the way, and BIS and PUCK searching his pockets, haul out the money.*)

GRACIE breathing hard turns and goes to book-case where he stands with his back to the room)

There is a little silence. DUCKY puzzled looks from DICK to GRACIE)

BIS. So you're a crook as well as a boasting fool.

PUCK. (*Furious*) I'll give you just two minutes to pack your traps and get out, before we throw you out. (*GRACIE does not move and PUCK starts for him but DUCKY moves and PUCK starts for him but DUCKY steps forward*)

DUCKY. Wait, Puck. I don't know what motive this chap has for assuming the guilt of somebody else., (*DICK starts*) but I want to saw now, that Martin did'nt take the money.

PUCK. (*Unbelieving*) He did'nt?

BIS. He had it in his pocket, Ducky—

DUCKY. Yes, but he didn't take it. I came in just as the man who IS the thief was taking the money from the drawer. (*DICK looks terror-stricken*) Evidently he is a coward as well as a crook, for he seems to be willing that an innocent man be blamed for it. He doesn't deserve any consideration, but for old times sake I'll give him a little. Is that O. K. with you, fellows? (*All agree, still mystified, none having noticed DICK*) All right. Walk out of this door, NOW, and never show your face around here again (*GRACIE is about to protest, but DICK, suddenly dropping his head, walks swiftly out past the astonished boys and out the door that DUCKY is holding open. DUCKY slams it on him*)

GRACIE. I—I took it—I

PUCK. Dick? Good God.

DUCKY. (*Turning on GRACIE as he is about to protest again*) I don't know why you want to take this on your own shoulders, Martin, but it won't go, I saw him take it, and I saw you there in that door. (*GRACIE turns and hides face on book-case*) Are you crazy Martin? What's Lester to you?

BIS. Did you know him before? (*GRACIE shakes head*) Well I'll be—

DUD. I think we owe Martin an apology.

PUCK. (*Going over and holding out his hand.* Put it there, Martin. I'm sorry. (*They shake hands silently*)

BIS. (*Going over to him*) I'm sorry too, old top, but Gee, appearances were all against you—you can realize that. (*GRACIE nods as he shakes hands.*)



PUCK. (*Flumping into chair at desk*) That dirty little hound and calling on my sister—(*Kicks savagely at waste basket and turns it over.* BIS *at table, hands in pocket*)

DUD. What possessed you to take the blame—

PUCK. MY sister—(*Stops furious*)

GRACIE. (*Coming slowly down L.*) That's just it, Puck, I—Your sister cares for him—she never would have written a letter like that if she didn't. Its going to make her awfully unhappy. (*PUCK sits hunched in his chair. DUD and DUCKY at c.*) There must have been a mighty good reason for him doing that. He got short of money or—something. You never know what's back of a thing like that. He's a nice fellow—

BIS. Standing there and letting you take the blame. He's a Hell of a nice fellow, I'll say.

GRACIE. I just told him to give ME the money. I saw him take it, as Ducky said. I figured you need never know he'd slipped up a bit, and Elaine—(*He stops, choked*) Elaine wouldn't know either.

PUCK. But, Martin, what's the idea?

GRACIE. I might as well tell you the whole thing. I'm, I'm dead in love with Elaine, see, and have been ever since I met her out west last summer, but Gosh, I never had a chance. I tried awful hard and all that—but—you see she was always saying I was too bashful and didn't think well enough of myself, and she said I ought to dance and take exercises to get bigger.—After she went home, I got hold of one of those "YOU CAN WIN" Magazines. It said all you have to do is to hold the right thought. Act like the person you want to be like. Act it all the time: say it out loud, all the



time, real positive. (*Boys look comprehending*)

DUCKY. Gosh.

GRACIE. It says to PRETEND to be the kind of a person you want to be, *and*—pretty soon you will be that person yourself, I wanted to have Elaine in love with me, so I pretended all the time that she was, and I thought it might make it stronger if I said other girls were too, see? I took exercises and learned to dance, and it DID do me lots of good—and I wrote her letters just like I'd have written them if I'd really been the a bang up kind of a fellow. Oh Lord, you'll all think I *am* a fool. (*Turns and goes up.*)

DUD. (*Quietly*) We think you're O. K. that's what *we* think.

BIS AND DUCKY. You bet!

(*During what follows BIS sees letter that DICK dropped, on the floor, stoops, picks it up and beckons to DUCKY who looks at it over his shoulder*)

PUCK. Well, what about the rest, Martin?

GRACIE. (*Returns slowly*) Oh, I just came here to school, and I thought, when I saw her on the street she was sort of impressed, for I do look better. I was scared to death tho, and I could hardly do it, but I made the grade. I went right up and I said I'M Louie Grace Mar—Oh yes, the magazine said to always state your name, positively, everything must be positive, nothing negative—state your name right off for it helps to impress your personality on the new acquaintance. Well, then I said to Elaine. "I'm not bashful. I'm a

big strong man, and I'm here to marry you—(*Boys are amused*) I didn't say June—to her, but I did to you fellows. Well she seemed sort of impressed, and I said to myself "The system is working." Its all right. But it is'nt, **it is all wrong**, for Lester is the one she cares for—the letter she wrote—

BIS. Here's the letter itself, Puck. Lester must have dropped it.

PUCK. (*Taking it angrily*) Give it here. That crook will never see it, or Elaine, either. (*He is about to tear it up when he catches sight of the basket and as he straightens it up to receive the torn letter, he catches sight of the envelope torn once across. He picks it up with an exclamation, and compares them, sees the address. Both letter and envelope are pink and the same. He glances with a little smile at GRACIE who hands in pockets is gazing miserably at his own feet.*)

DUD. And so to save the man you think she cares for, you would let yourself be branded as a thief?

GRACIE. Why yes. That's all right. I'll be going away anyhow. I couldn't ever stay and see another man get her. Now, she's going to be unhappy, and I can't help her. Puck, can't you forget this. Gee, we all have our temptations. We are no angels. Listen just made one bad step—it was only once.

DUCKY. He took that money, Martin, so that he could make a bad check good.

BIS. How do you know?

DUCKY. He's over at Harry's pretty regular and I got a hunch that maybe he owed Harry some money. Harry's a mean cuss that way, and

so I called Harry up. He thought I was trying to fix things for Lester, I guess, for I didn't ask a thing. He roared at me right off the bat—"If he does not make that check good by tomorrow morning he goes to jail. He's nothing but a little rat anyhow, and I'm done fooling." (*Waves his hands*) There you are.

GRACIE. Good God! Elaine, what will she do—

PUCK. (*Smiling*) I don't think she'll care as much as you think. Martin, Its white of you to try to help him, but its no go, for he's a triple thief. He gave Harry a bad check, he stole from Dud to cover it up, and he stole from you, Martin.

GRACIE. From *me*? (*DUD looks over PUCK's shoulder.*)

PUCK. Yes for that letter was'nt for him at all, it was for you—(*GRACIE looks uncomprehending*)

PUCK. Here's the envelope, addressed in Elaine's handwriting, same paper as the envelope, and the letter was for you. (*GRACIE is overcome*) Just to prove to you fellows beyond a sneaking doubt you might have that Elaine does not care for Lester and never did, I'm going to read you this—There is no heading, that's why Lester got away with it. (*Reads from letter*) "When I met you today I knew that I had been very wrong, for you have become all you said you had. Fine and strong and forceful and true. (*GRACIE says "Gosh"*) I didn't realize it before, but I do now. I love you—and well, come over tonight—will you dear? Elaine" (*GRACIE in a transport of joy grabs the letter and reads it*)

GRACIE. Oh Gosh! fellows, I can't believe it. I—

DUD. (*Shaking his hand*) Put it here, old fellow. (*BIS and DUCKY crowd around him but he pushes them all aside and grabs telephone book, hunts frantically for number—*

GRACIE. Oh what's the number. Puck, what's Elaine's number?

PUCK. 218.

GRACIE. (*Wildly*) (*in phone*) 218. (*Rattles receiver*) Oh Lord! 218. Yes, yes and make it snappy—Hello is Mrs. Mar—er—er El—er—er Miss Evans there? (*BIS at R. C. DUD at C. back of desk. PUCK at R. of desk strokes chin thoughtfully and eyes the excited GRACIE*)

GRACIE. Hello, hello, Elaine? DARLING, it's, its—Lou—Lou—yes. I got your note and will you marry me in June—no, make it sooner, March—January. Make it tomorrow—or next week. Next week? Oh no, not next month—(*pause*) Well, all right next month sure—and I'm coming right over—(*Hangs up*) (*Rushes to hat rack, grabs a hat much too small and is about to dash out when PUCK stops him.*)

PUCK. Wait a minute, Martin. (*He stops*) We all know you're a mighty good scout, but Elaine has'nt any father, and before I let her be swept off her feet with this whirlwind stuff, I want to ask you a few questions—

GRACIE. (*A little sobered*) Well—

PUCK. Its up to me to see that she marries a man that can support her—

GRACIE. That's all right. I've got a lot of

money—(*Bis gives a whistle*)

PUCK. Well that is not all. I want to know what sort of standing you and your family have where you come from. What and who you are—you understand—

GRACIE. (*As DUD nods approval*) Sure, I guess that will be all right too. I'm Louie Grace—

BIS AND DUCKY. (*Grinning while DUD laughs*)  
SO YOU SAID!!

GRACIE. —and I guess our standing will suit you. My dad's James H. Martin and he's the Governor of Arkansas. (*All look overcome*)

PUCK. (*Aghast*) Governor—YE GODS! (*Sinks into chair at desk*)

GRACIE. (*Starting out once more*) And say Ducky, while I'm gone, call up that fellow down at the news-stand and tell him to enter my name for a LIFE subscription to that "YOU CAN WIN" magazine, for believe me, "HE'S GOT THE RIGHT DOPE!!"

(*Jams on too small hat and dashes out L. C. while boys fall into their seats with a whoop.*)

-:- CURTAIN -:-

*This play must be acted snappily and not allowed to drag and the actors should be young men who can catch the spirit of the college boy and enter into it.*













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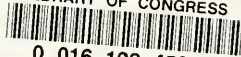
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A comedy in four acts, by Marion Short, author of "The Varsity Coach," "The Touch-Down," etc. 6 males, 8 females. Costumes modern. One interior scene.

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